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News Division

News Release

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1,925 Providers In Kentucky Receive \$115,567,468 Under EHR Incentive Programs

More than 100,000 health care providers have been paid under the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) announced today. Of those, 1,925 eligible providers in Kentucky have received \$115,567,468 in payments.

CMS Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner and National Coordinator for Health Information Technology Farzad Mostashari, M.D., Sc.M., first proposed the 100,000 goal in March in a blog that declared 2012 the “Year of Meaningful Use” (<http://blog.cms.gov/2012/03/23/2012-the-year-of-meaningful-use/>).

“Meeting this goal so early in the year is a testament to the commitment of everyone who has worked hard to meet the challenges of integrating EHRs and health information technology into clinical practice,” said Acting Administrator Tavenner. “Not only have state Medicaid programs, public health departments, and many other stakeholders given their support to the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, but numerous eligible health professionals and hospitals have recognized the potential of EHRs to provide better patient care, reduce medical errors, cut down on paperwork, and eliminate duplicate screenings and tests.”

The EHR Incentive Programs, which began in 2011, provide incentive payments to eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals as they adopt, implement, upgrade, or meaningfully use certified EHR technology in ways that improve care. Eligible professionals include physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and some physician assistants.

As of the end of May 2012:

- Over \$5.7 billion in EHR Incentive Program payments were made.
- More than \$3 billion in Medicare EHR Incentive Program payments were made between May 2011 (when the first payments were released) and the end of May 2012.
- More than \$2.6 billion in Medicaid EHR Incentive Program payments were made between January 2011 (when the first states launched their programs) and the end of May 2012.
- More than 110,000 eligible professionals and over 2,400 eligible hospitals have been paid by the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs.
- Approximately 48 percent of all eligible hospitals and critical access hospitals in the U.S. have received an incentive payment for adopting, implementing, upgrading, or meaningfully using an EHR.
- One out of every 5 Medicare and Medicaid eligible professionals in the U.S. has received an incentive payment for adopting, implementing, upgrading, or meaningfully using an EHR.

“The EHR Incentive Programs have really helped jump-start the use of electronic health records by health care providers all across the country,” said Dr. Mostashari. “Thanks in great part to the work conducted by

the ONC-sponsored Regional Extension Centers and Beacon Communities Programs, more and more providers across the country – especially those in rural communities – are now ready to use EHRs.”

ONC, which works closely with CMS on the EHR Incentive Programs, provides grants to Regional Extension Centers (RECs) to support health care providers in the adoption and Meaningful Use of EHRs. In this capacity, RECs serve as:

- Trusted advisors that provide unbiased support throughout the EHR process – from start to finish.
- Experts with broad, practical Health IT knowledge.
- Two-way pipelines connecting providers to the local and federal resources needed to understand the changing healthcare landscape.

Through the end of May 2012, over 133,000 primary care providers and 10,000 specialists were partnering with RECs to overcome common EHR adoption barriers. Of these providers, 70 percent of small practice providers in rural areas as well as 74 percent of critical access hospitals are working with RECs. RECs work to ensure these clinicians meet meaningful use standards and receive incentive payments through the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Over 12,000 providers working with RECs have already received incentive payments.

ONC also provides more than \$250 million over three years to the 17 selected Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Programs. Each of the communities, with its unique population and regional context, is actively working to:

- Build and strengthen the health IT infrastructure and exchange capabilities within its community, positioning each community to pursue a new level of sustainable health care quality and efficiency over the coming years;
- Translate investments in health IT in the short run to measureable improvements in cost, quality and population health; and
- Develop innovative approaches to performance measurement, technology and care delivery to accelerate evidence generation for new approaches.

To address increased demand for health IT workers, ONC invested \$116 million in the Health IT Workforce Development Program, which consists of four initiatives: Community College Consortia to Educate Health IT Professionals, Curriculum Development Centers Program, Competency Exam Program, and Program for Assistance for University-Based Training.

Since its launch in September 2010, the Community College Consortia Program has rapidly trained more than 13,000 professionals nationwide. The majority of students are mid-career healthcare or IT professionals with prior experience in fields outside health IT. Student demographics included significant minority and rural representation. By leveraging distance learning platforms, the program has trained students in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

The Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs provide incentive payments for using EHR technology in ‘meaningful’ ways that lead to higher quality care, improved patient safety, and shared decision making by patients and physicians. Under the Medicare EHR incentive program, eligible professionals can receive as much as \$44,000 over a consecutive five-year period. Under the Medicaid incentive program, eligible professionals can receive as much as \$63,750 over six years. Under both the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, eligible hospitals and critical access hospitals can receive millions of dollars for implementing and meaningfully using certified EHR technology.

Under the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, eligible providers can receive incentive payments in their first year of participation by successfully registering through CMS’ web-based registration system and then demonstrating to their state that they are eligible and have adopted, implemented, or upgraded certified EHR technology. Medicaid EPs and eligible hospitals do not need to attest to meeting meaningful use criteria in the first year. However, they will have to demonstrate meaningful use in subsequent years.

Forty-four states are participating in the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program as of May 2012. For more information on which states are participating, please visit the EHR Incentive Programs website at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/MedicaidStateInfo.html>. CMS expects the remaining states to launch their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs by the end of 2012.

For more information on the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, visit: <http://www.cms.gov/ehrincentiveprograms/>.

Information on ONC's broad range of activities may be viewed at http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_home/1204.

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